REMARKS

Claims 1–16 are pending and were rejected. No claims are amended herein. Claims 1–16 remain pending. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1–16 are requested in view of the following remarks, which address only independent claim 1. Because each of the other claims either depends from claim 1 or otherwise includes limitations similar to those recited in claim 1, the remaining claims are necessarily allowable for at least the reasons set forth below with respect to claim 1.

Rejection of Claim 1 Under § 102

Claims 1–2, 5, 9–12, and 15–16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,710,839 to Cok ("Cok"). Cok describes a method and apparatus for obscuring features of an image. More specifically, Cok describes a technique in which an image is acquired, a user designates a portion of the image to be obscured, and the computer applies a convolution kernel to the image to obscure the selected portion. Cok at col. 3, ll. 1–18.

Claim 1 is drawn to a method of applying a blur to an image that includes three steps. The first of these steps is "defining a primary kernel to compute an output pixel as a weighted average of a plurality of pixels of the image *wherein a spatial relationship between the output pixel and the plurality of pixels is determined by a step size of the primary kernel*" (emphasis added). Examiner contends that this limitation is met by Cok at col. 3, l. 15 and Figs. 5a–5d. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The cited portion of Cok does not teach or suggest that the spatial relationship between the output pixel and the plurality of pixels used in the computation is determined by the step size of the primary kernel. The cited passage says nothing at all about a step size of the primary kernel. Moreover, Figs. 5a–5d, which illustrate exemplary kernels used in Cok, all feature the same step size. Therefore Cok fails to meet this first limitation of claim 1.

The second step recited in claim 1 requires "applying the primary kernel to each pixel of the image to produce an intermediate result." The third step requires "*increasing the step size of the primary kernel to create a higher order primary kernel* and applying the higher order primary kernel to the intermediate result to produce a result image" (emphasis added). Examiner contends that the third limitation is met by Cok at col. 4, l. 20. However, neither this passage nor any other portion of Cok teaches anything about increasing the step size of the primary kernel to produce a higher order kernel. In fact, Cok at col. 4, ll. 1–6 state that "Four separate kernels are

used to obscure the region of interest.... Each kernel is used on one of the four sides of the rectangular region of interest. Alternatively, *the kernels can be considered as the same kernel but rotated when applied to each of the four sides*" (emphasis added). This passage makes clear that there is no change in step size or order of the kernel as required by claim 1.

Therefore, Cok fails to teach at least two limitations of claim 1. Specifically, Cok fails to teach or suggest "defining a primary kernel ... wherein a spatial relationship between the output pixel and the plurality of pixels is determined by a step size of the primary kernel." Cok further fails to teach or suggest "increasing the step size of the primary kernel to create a higher order primary kernel and applying the higher order primary kernel to the intermediate result to produce a result image."

Conclusion

Because Cok does not teach each limitation of claim 1, it cannot anticipate claim 1. Claims 2–10 depend from claim 1 and therefore incorporate the limitations of claim 1. These claims are therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above. Independent claim 11 recites limitations similar to those discussed above, and claims 12–16 depend from claim 11. Therefore these claims are also allowable for the reasons set forth above. Withdrawal of all pending rejections and a Notice of Allowance for these claims is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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